

*'Eugenics is the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage.'*—SIR FRANCIS GALTON (1904)

# The Eugenics Review

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## NOTES OF THE QUARTER

### A SURVEY OF OPINION

FOR SOME TIME past many of the Honorary Officers of the Eugenics Society have felt it would be interesting and helpful to discover the opinion of the educated public on eugenics, and in 1961 the *Society's* Council appointed an *ad hoc* Committee, with advisers from Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., to prepare a questionnaire for distribution as a pilot survey.

This questionnaire was reproduced in the October 1961 number of the REVIEW (53 180-1) at approximately the time of its distribution by post to a random selection of 1,000 people whose names appear in *Who's Who*, 406 of whom returned completed questionnaires. This is reported as being a good average rate in comparison with responses to similar surveys; furthermore, 4 per cent of those who did not complete their questionnaires replied in favourable terms.

Of the remaining 594, eighteen of the questionnaires were not received by the addressees, due to their decease or absence from home, and of a further ninety-six, forty-five people returned theirs with a refusal to take part and the rest did not complete theirs for a variety of reasons including diffidence and old age. Six questionnaires were returned too late for inclusion in the analysis; the findings are thus based on the opinions of 400 people.

It would be very interesting to know the attitudes towards eugenics and world population control of the 480 who made no response in spite of a reminder and a second copy of the questionnaire having been sent to them. Granted that of this sample some will have many demands upon their time and others will be old or infirm, how many of the questionnaires were ignored through sheer lack of interest in the subject? Or the kind of tepid lack of enthusiasm which leads to procrastination? It seems likely that anyone who felt keenly the importance of the whole problem would make an effort to send a reply of some kind in the prepaid envelope! Obviously the corollary to this is that the sample which has been analysed may be overweighted by knowledgeable people who are particularly interested in the subject.

When considering the analyses of the 400 completed questionnaires, there are three points to be borne in mind: the questionnaire was directed to people who are on the whole beyond middle age—1 per cent were under thirty-five, 43 per cent were aged sixty-five or over; the respondents were predominantly male, 93 per cent were or had been married; they were, one supposes, people of more than average intelligence.

Occupations have been divided into six categories: Academics, science, medicine and clergy, 174; Civil Service and local government, 114; Business and engineering, 98; the Services, 84; Arts, journalism and entertainment, 60; Law and politics, 50. Many people had been concerned with more than one main occupation and, therefore, appear in more than one group.

The replies have been analysed and set out in eleven tables; the findings are summarized below:

1 and 2. THE MEANING OF THE WORD *Eugenics* AND PROBLEMS WITH WHICH EUGENICS MIGHT BE THOUGHT TO BE CONCERNED. Eighty-nine per cent of all respondents gave broadly correct definitions of eugenics. Of these all but 10 per cent specifically mentioned the concept of improving the species. Only 2 per cent mentioned Francis Galton or his definition of the word, the largest percentage of those who referred to Galton were in the "academics" category. He is apparently unknown to people engaged in business, the services and the arts.

Three out of four people considered eugenics to be concerned with the limitation of problem families; three out of five thought it is concerned with the encouragement of some persons to have more children than others; but only 40 per cent considered that it included the encouragement of the birth of more children to families whose early born children show particular promise.

While eugenics was seen to be concerned with the problem of the provision of facilities for voluntary sterilization by 57 per cent of respondents, only one in three considered its function could also extend to providing better conditions of education for selected people. This attitude was more marked in the youngest age group than in the others.

3. THE ROLE OF NATURAL SELECTION IN RELATION TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE HUMAN RACE AND ITS OPERATION IN THE WORLD TO-DAY. Eighty-three per cent considered that the human species has evolved from lower forms of life through natural selection. The armed services provide the only sizeable opposition to this view—27 per cent of this group believed in "creation." Of the "natural selection" school of thought, two-fifths believed that it still operates in the human race, but one quarter of the total thought that it only operates in some parts of the world; 3 per cent fell into the "don't know" category.

4 to 6. HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT: THEIR INFLUENCE ON INTELLIGENCE AND BEHAVIOUR; ATTITUDES TOWARDS RESEARCH IN HUMAN HERED-

ITY. Fifty-eight per cent believed that heredity has more effect than environment upon intelligence and 30 per cent considered that both have an equal effect. As regards social behaviour the answers were reversed: 61 per cent considered that environment has the greater effect, but the older respondents attached more importance to heredity than did the younger ones.

Overall, four out of every five considered that research on human heredity should be actively encouraged. Fifteen per cent were content that it should be tolerated while 3 per cent were specifically against it. Again there was a marked difference of opinion between the occupational groups: 30 per cent of the armed services thought that research can only be tolerated, while 91 per cent of the academics were in favour of its encouragement. Out of the 80 per cent who would encourage research, 23 per cent would only agree on the general grounds that all knowledge is useful; of the others, the majority believed that it is needed to improve the quality of the human species and a large proportion thought it should be carried on in order to provide basic knowledge of eugenics and heredity.

7 to 11. WORLD POPULATION AND ITS CONTROL. Nearly everyone (90 per cent) agreed that the population of the world is increasing fast, but less than one half of all respondents thought that it is too large in relation to the natural resources of the world. But nine out of ten considered that, while world resources should be increased, there should be some control of population in the future.

There were varying opinions on birth control and publicity. All groups were consistent in their majority opinion that birth control should be encouraged, but while 41 per cent considered that it receives enough publicity in the United Kingdom, 44 per cent thought that it did not; 55 per cent mentioned other parts of the world, particularly the Asian countries, where they thought there was not enough propaganda for birth control. Eight per cent thought there should be more birth control publicity in Roman Catholic countries.

One person in seven or eight thought that birth control should not be widely applied in this country and should be discouraged or forbidden;

of these people 3 per cent were in the youngest and 11 per cent in the oldest age groups.

Only 8 per cent thought that an increase in world resources could be relied upon to meet the needs of the expanding population, 91 per cent agreed that efforts should also be made to control population increase, but there were mixed reactions to suggestions as to how world population could best be controlled. While nearly three quarters were in favour of encouraging the use of birth control by everyone and six out of ten agreed with seeking to deter certain people from having children, only two in ten felt that we should go so far as to offer financial encouragement to selected people to have more children.

Thirty per cent of the respondents replied to a request for their own suggestions as to how world population could be controlled; 14 per cent of these suggested that sex education should be improved and more publicity given to birth control, while a percentage of two or three each advocated one of the following means, increased parental responsibility and self-control, a higher standard of living leading to a fall in the birth rate, research on contraception, the limitation of family allowances, and compulsory sterilization.

With regard to voluntary sterilization, 55 per cent thought that there should be more opportunities for this operation, but in the case of abortion, only 31 per cent favoured its legalization, disapproval being most marked among the armed services (56 per cent).

It is noteworthy that throughout this report the differences are between occupational groups rather than age groups, but it must be remembered that the majority of the respondents were over forty-four years of age.

The great difficulty in coming to any informed opinion on the attitude of *Who's Who* entrants on the subjects raised in the questionnaire remains the relatively small percentage who answered. It is reasonable to suppose that amongst those who did not answer was a bigger proportion opposed to all that we stand for. Encouraging though it certainly is to find that 90 per cent of our correspondents thought that population control was needed, and that 80 per cent wished research on eugenic problems to be

fostered; encouraging though it is that only 10 per cent, mostly in the armed services, believed in an origin straight from Minerva's brow and no nonsense about evolution, still there remains the question of what opposition was contained in that 60 per cent who failed to answer. There seems no satisfactory or indeed practicable way of tackling this problem; so there, for the moment, the matter rests.

### THE CROWDED WORLD

A NOTE OF the Quarter in the last issue of this REVIEW drew attention to the first article in the series, "The Crowded World," which ran in *Punch* during the months of November and December last. In this article, Sir Julian Huxley outlined the problem. He was followed by other distinguished contributors, who instructed the reader with confident knowledge and an appropriately light touch.

Ritchie Calder observed that a nuclear war or the radio-active contamination of our environment might solve the population problem effectively, yet in a way which we cannot and must not willingly contemplate. Elspeth Huxley brought us back to the primitive world of fertility religion which still survives in parts of the globe, and reminded us how, in remote communities, abortion, tabu, and other expedients or beliefs serve to check the growth of the population. Alan Gemmell examined the relation between nutrition and fertility, and concluded that a low protein diet is not necessarily (as one specialist had inferred) a major factor in a high birth rate; the population explosion cannot be explained or handled simply in terms of the undernourishment of underdeveloped peoples. Desmond Donnelly took a closer look at the Far East, and contrasted the situations in India and China—long-term expansion of resources by democratic means with the aid of foreign capital, versus short-term totalitarian regimentation: the tortoise versus the hare. Mary Adams followed with a "Conversation after School" on the uses of biology—the "pill" as seen through the eyes of a teenage schoolgirl: "Poor old Mum. She doesn't know a thing really. I wonder what I ought to tell her?" In an "Orwellian forecast," Claud Cockburn chronicled the coming decade as seen from the standpoint

of the next century. We neglected to make habitable the desert regions of Scotland; we shelved the population problem in the unconscious hope that nuclear war would solve it; we restricted immigration and looked fearfully at China's millions; we assumed that any attempt to increase food supplies would fail like the Ground Nuts Scheme—and then came an “Irish Scare” which diverted attention from population to a sinister Hibernian plot for gaining control of the world! The real danger proved to be the Irish, whose proliferation was unimpeded by contraception, which they had rejected on religious grounds! Fittingly at this point Maurice O’Leary came in to expound the Roman Catholic view. Family planning is right and proper, but “the design and structure of the sexual act must be respected,” and “may not be changed through contraceptives . . .” Instinct must not be substituted for reason as the regulator of sexual conduct. The premises of the Roman Catholic position remain unaltered and apparently unalterable—but none the less perplexing, even to other Christians. Marghanita Laski brought readers back from theology to amenity. Few of us now have enough room, even here, to live as we want to live, or as we deserve to live—and what prospect have the Asians, if population control gives them no better quality of life than we have in England? Without leaders, good people, creative people, intelligent people, what have we or they got to look forward to?

On this searching question the series ended. The problem of the crowded world had been handled throughout in a sensible and responsible way, and the articles, backed by telling cartoons, can have done nothing but good. *Punch* is to be commended for this attempt to awaken and inform the public conscience.

### EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

IN GIVING THE fifth Godfrey Thomson lecture\* at Moray House last year, Professor D. V. Glass surveyed the present state of knowledge concerning the demographic and sociological aspects of intellectual ability. While giving a useful

summary of the most significant work in recent times on the inheritance of ability, he emphasized that this is not sufficiently comprehensive to enable a resolution of the “paradox of continuing differential fertility and unchanged intelligence level.” But in a changing world, with new influences coming into play and new trends asserting themselves, such as the tendency towards larger families on the part of the intellectually able, Professor Glass was not disposed to over-emphasize the importance of this subject as an aim of further studies. He showed himself to be at least as interested in analyses of the extent to which the abilities of the present generation of children—and the next—are going to be properly fostered and given their full scope.

The suggestions made in recent months, as the result of a number of independent surveys, that in relation to the transmission of intelligence, differential marriage may operate to counteract differential fertility, tend to support this attitude of Professor Glass. However this may be, one should certainly sympathize with his view that more encouragement should be given than at present to talented children to pursue higher educational courses. Some of those of the highest potential still leave school too early, or fail to proceed to a University, for economic reasons and as a result of social class influences. If these obstacles could be overcome—and they are often due as much to the limited mental outlook of the parents as to the limitations of their pockets—university entrance standard might be reached by nearly twice as many children as at present.

Nothing in Professor Glass’s observations can, of course, alter the fundamental need to improve man’s genetic endowments. If the quality of the national intelligence is not falling, it is at least not rising, and needs to be raised. Let us not only encourage more to go to the Universities but also see to it that still more are capable of aspiring to that level of advancement in education. The basic objectives of eugenics are as important as ever.

### EUGENICS AND HUMAN GENETICS

WE PRINT IN this issue of the REVIEW a shortened version of Dr. L. C. Dunn’s presidential address to the American Society of Human

\* *Differential Fertility, Ability and Educational Objectives: Problems for Study*. Published by the Trustees of the Godfrey Thomson Lecture Fund 1961. Pp. 27.

Genetics. Dr. Dunn describes how, in the past, the concept of eugenics had, in some quarters, acted as a brake on the application of genetic principles to the study of mankind.

Early eugenisists seem to have sought to become all things to all men: eugenics was to some a science and to others a social movement, and nowhere was this more apparent than in England, where the dissensions between the Galton Laboratory and the then Eugenics Education Society are now a part of the history of eugenics. But this dichotomy was, as all older members of our *Society* know, much more evident in its early days than at present. The controversies between representatives of the Eugenics Society and the Galton Laboratory, though prominent before 1914—or perhaps the early 1920s—have not been heard of for many years, and we believe that similarly harmonious relations between biologists and sociologists prevail in the U.S.A.

It is gratifying to see, in the penultimate paragraph of his article that Dr. Dunn believes that the two schools of thought can settle their difficulties, if indeed these exist, by harmonious cohabitation rather than by divorce. This is what members of the British Society have striven to achieve over the last thirty years.

But this aspect of Dr. Dunn's lecture must not be unduly stressed. He also discusses the development of the eugenic movement in the United States, the sinister conversion of eugenic ideals to the Nazi concept of *rassenhygiene*, and briefly touches on what little is known of eugenics in the U.S.S.R. Finally he reviews the techniques for controlled human breeding—notably those set forth by Herbert Brewer and H. J. Muller—envisaged for the near and distant future.

Following Dr. Dunn's historical study, it is interesting to turn to a statement of the position to-day. One has been issued by the Special Committee of the Board of Directors of the American Eugenics Society and we are fortunate

in having been given the opportunity of reprinting it in this number of the REVIEW. Fellows and Members of the *Society* who have not access to the *Eugenics Quarterly* will, we are sure, welcome the publication in England of this concise affirmation of American eugenic policies.

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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DR. BECKMAN WAS educated at the University of Uppsala, where he received his Ph.D. in 1959. He is at present associate professor of Human Genetics at the University of Uppsala. His work has been concerned with population studies in Sweden, with special emphasis on the Lapps (*A Contribution to the Physical Anthropology and Population Genetics of Sweden*, 1959) and with the genetics of serum protein variations in man and other primates.

*Professor L. C. Dunn, Sc.D.*

PROFESSOR L. C. DUNN, who received his B.S. degree at Dartmouth College in 1915 and the Sc.D. Harvard in 1920, having served as Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, A.E.F. from 1917-19, has held a number of appointments in the field of genetics and is at present Professor of Zoology at Columbia University, New York. Through the years he has several times visited Europe as Guest Investigator at the Universities of Edinburgh, London, Oslo and Rome and at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut in Berlin.

Dr. Dunn has acted as editor of *Genetics*, the *Columbia Biological Series* and *American Naturalist* and is at present on the editorial boards of several scientific journals. In 1961 he was president of the American Society of Human Genetics.

Besides numerous contributions to periodicals and several articles in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, his publications include *Heredity and Variation* (1932), *Heredity, Race and Society* (with Th. Dobzhansky—third revised edition 1957) and *Heredity and Evolution in Human Populations* (1958).